

Message Text

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ORIGIN H-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AID-05 IGA-02
DHA-02 MC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ARA-06 /071 R

DRAFTED BY H:ASWIFT:KAM
APPROVED BY EA:RHOLBROOKE
EAPHL:BAFLECK

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P 260025Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 121525

FOR STULL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, RP

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR PHILIPPINES

1. AS OPPORTUNITY ARISES, EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE THE POINT TO THE GOP THAT WE HAD TO MAKE STRENUOUS EFFORT IN CONGRESS TO STAGE OFF SERIOUS CUTS IN PHILIPPINES MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS. CONGRESS IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH PHILIPPINE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND THIS CONCERN WAS HEIGHTENED BY HERRERA CASE.

2. OUR MAIN PROBLEMS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN ON THE HOUSE SIDE. IT WAS ONLY AFTER EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE THAT CONGRESSMAN BERKELEY BEDELL AGREED NOT TO ATTACK THE PHILIPPINE GRANT MAP PROGRAM WHEN THE AUTHORIZATION BILL WENT TO THE HOUSE FLOOR MAY 24. BEDELL DID THIS, HOWEVER, ONLY ON THE BASIS OF A PROMISE FROM HIRC CHAIRMAN
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ZABLOCKI TO REVIEW THE PHILIPPINE HUMAN RIGHTS CAREFULLY BEFORE RENEWING MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN FY 79. (TEXT OF FLOOR DEBATE BEING BENT BY SEPTEL.)

3. THE PHILIPPINE PROGRAM WAS ALSO UNDER HEAVY FIRE IN LONG'S HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE. CONGRESSWOMAN BURKE PROPOSED A 50 PERCENT CUT IN THE PHILIPPINE PROGRAM

TO 9.8 MILLION GRANT 10 FMS AND NO TRAINING. AGAIN ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE MADE A MAJOR EFFORT BOTH WITH BURKE AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO HEAD OFF THESE CUTS. IN ADDITION CONGRESSMAN STOKES HAD A DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL. DURING THE MARK UP, STOKES REPEATED THIS CONVERSATION, PERSUASIVELY ARGUING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS ADMINISTRATION WERE COMMITTED TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD REQUESTED TIME FROM THE CONGRESS TO LET HIS NEW POLICIES WORK. IN THE DEAL FINALLY STRUCK AMONG SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS THE PHILIPPINES WAS GIVEN A RELATIVELY MILD CUT ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS TO 16.6 GRANT MAP, 17.0 FMS AND 0.6 IMET.

4. THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THEY ARE ASSOCIATED ON THE HILL WITH THE GROUP OF COUNTRIES IDENTIFIED AS MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS (CHILE, ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, ETHIOPIA). UNLESS MAJOR PROGRESS IS MADE SOON IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD, THE PHILIPPINES WILL BE FACED IN CONGRESS WITH INCREASED CONCERN AND MOUNTING OPPOSITION TO CONTINUED MILITARY ASSISTANCE. VANCE

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